



THE CITY OF SAN DIEGO

Historical Resources Board

DATE ISSUED: July 10, 2009 REPORT NO. HRB-09-045

ATTENTION: Historical Resources Board
Agenda of July 23, 2009

SUBJECT: **ITEM #7 – Mabel B. Schiller/Richard Requa House**

APPLICANT: Jeffrey Gunn & Megan Marcotte, owners; represented by Scott Moomjian

LOCATION: 2207 29th Street, Greater Golden Hill Community, Council District 3

DESCRIPTION: Consider the designation of the Mabel B. Schiller/Richard Requa House located at 2207 29th Street as a historical resource.

STAFF RECOMMENDATION

Designate the Mabel B. Schiller/Richard Requa House located at 2207 29th Street as a historical resource with a period of significance of 1939 under HRB Criteria C and D. This recommendation is based on the following findings:

1. The resource embodies distinctive characteristics of Modern Minimal Traditional architecture through the retention of character defining features and retains a good level of architectural integrity from its period of significance, the construction date of 1939.
2. The resource is a notable work of master architect, Richard Requa and his interpretation of Modern architecture through the integration of architecture, landscaping and terrain.



BACKGROUND

This item is being brought before the Historical Resources Board in conjunction with a proposed building modification or demolition of a structure of 45 years or more, consistent with San Diego Municipal Code Section 143.0212.

The one-story Modern Minimal Traditional home was designed by Richard Requa in 1939. This home is likely one of Requa's last designs as he died in 1941. The home was built for Mabel B. Schiller; however she did not occupy the property for long as she sold it in 1941.

ANALYSIS

A historical resource research report was prepared by Scott Moomjian, which concludes that the resource is not significant under any HRB Criteria. Staff disagrees with the consultant's report and finds the property to be a significant historical resource under HRB Criteria C and D as follows:

CRITERION C - Embodies distinctive characteristics of a style, type, period or method of construction or is a valuable example of the use of natural materials or craftsmanship.

The one-story home was constructed in 1939 and sits on the northeast corner of 29th and Ivy Street. The dwelling is elevated from the street level due to the sloping nature of the site and sits on concrete footings and wood posts. The garage and a section of the rear of the home sit on concrete slabs. The home features a low-pitched, hipped roof with wide overhanging boxed eaves. The roof is sheathed in composition shingle, but the original Requa drawings indicate it was originally wood shingles. The exterior of the home is clad with smooth stucco. Fenestration throughout the building is original and consists of fixed, double hung, and casement windows.

The west elevation is the primary façade of the building and is overall characterized by an asymmetrical, tripartite composition. An off-center, small porch is the focal point of the west elevation. Centered within the porch is a large picture window that consists of a fixed window flanked by wood casement windows. A pair of casement windows is located to the north of the porch while another large picture window is located to the south.

Along the south elevation, a large chimney pierces the eave and is flanked on either side by stationary, casement windows. At the east end of the same wall, a double hung window is protected by a wrought iron grille that features integrated pot rings. Protective wrought iron grilles can be found at several other windows throughout the home, particularly along the east elevation. The wrought iron grilles including the pot rings are original to Requa's design.

Concrete block walls frame the home along all sides. These walls are finished with smooth stucco, and serve to integrate the landscaping with the home visually and functionally. Along the west elevation a wrought iron gate leads to concrete steps that provide access to the front entryway and porch. Mature landscaping can be found along the west and south elevations.

Originally, a detached garage was located on the north side of the home. In 1951, William C. Berry, draftsman, designed an addition for the home, thereby connecting the garage to the residence. This addition is compatible, but distinguished from the original home as it is finished with stucco, features fixed and casement windows, and is set back from the original west wall of the home.

The Mabel B. Schiller/Richard Requa House embodies distinctive characteristics of Modern Minimal Traditional architecture, a style that generally dates to the period 1935 to 1955. Modern Minimal Traditional buildings reflect traditional architectural forms and eclectic styles, but display simpler and less extensive ornamentation and detailing of earlier Revival styles. As defined in the City of San Diego's Modernism Context Statement, primary character defining features include "compact size (usually single story), low-pitched gabled or hipped roofs with shallow overhangs, simplified details of limited extent, traditional building materials (wood siding, stucco, brick, and stone, emphasizing the street façade." The Mabel B. Schiller/Richard Requa House exhibits all of these characteristics, but rather than a shallow eave, the building features a wide eave overhang. Secondary character defining features as defined in the Modernism Context Statement include "simple floor plan with minimal corners, small front porches, modestly sized wood framed windows, occasionally one large picture window, and detached or attached front-facing garages." The building also reflects all of these secondary character defining features. In addition, the building embodies one of the tenets of Modern architecture and design in its integration of the building with the landscape. The landscape features were clearly incorporated by Requa into the design and given equal importance to the architecture. The integration of the architecture with the landscape reflects one of the main principles of Modernism in that the line between indoors and outdoors is blurred and the emphasis is on the design of space.

Though the Modernism Context Statement indicates the majority of Modern Minimal Traditional buildings will gain their significance in a district context, the Context Statement provides evaluation criteria for those resources that may qualify for individual listing. The criteria for individual designation includes unique or distinguished examples that exhibit the primary character defining features and most if not all of the secondary character defining features. The building must retain a high degree of integrity, and may be associated with a master builder, designer, or architect. The Mabel B. Schiller/Richard Requa House meets all of these evaluation criteria. The home is a distinguished example of Modern Minimal Traditional architecture as it reflects the modest nature of Modern architecture constructed in the late 1930s during the Depression and prior to World War II, retains both primary and secondary character defining features the Modern sub-style, and is designed by a master architect. Therefore, Staff recommends designation of the Mabel B. Schiller/Richard Requa House under HRB Criterion C.

CRITERION D - Is representative of a notable work of a master builder, designer, architect, engineer, landscape architect, interior designer, artist or craftsman.

Richard Requa (1881-1941) designed 2207 29th Street in 1939, towards the latter part of his career. Requa died suddenly in 1941 due to heart problems; however it has been well documented that he had a prolific career as an architect prior to his death. Requa came to San Diego in 1900, and though he did not attend architecture school he trained under Irving Gill, one

of the early Modernists in San Diego. Gill was known for simplifying his designs, reducing ornamentation, and focusing on the mass and shape of a building. Requa was influenced by Gill's ideas and would incorporate them into his own designs after he left Gill's office.

Recognized as a master architect by the HRB, Requa was interested in a variety of architectural styles including Colonial Mexico, Pueblo, Spanish, and Moorish. Historian Parker Jackson has described Requa's style as "Southern Californian Architecture" and that Requa believed "the design of the building, the landscaping and the terrain should all be compatible and complement each other." The combination of landscape, terrain, and architecture can be seen in 2207 29th Street as the siting of the building responds to the topography and the landscaping elements (walls, walkways, and gate) blend with the architecture. Requa's work in the late 1930s reflects his interest in various architectural styles and indicates his talent as an architect was not confined to one particular style.

There are over 20 designated historical resources in San Diego designed by Requa. Four of these designated sites were built after 1935 - the "Deep Hearth" Alfred R. Mitchell House (1937, HRB Site #202), the County Administration Building (1936-1938, HRB Site #203), the Wetzel House (1935, HRB Site #512), and the Cortis and Elizabeth Hamilton/Richard S. Requa House (1941, HRB Site #551). The Mitchell House was also designed in a Modern architectural style with integrated landscaping and was unusual in that Alfred Mitchell, a painter, traded services with Requa for the design of the home. The Hamilton/Requa House was designated under Criterion C as "... a rare example of a Requa-designed California Craftsman with Egyptian and Classic Revival detailing and strong modern influences." The home was also designated under Criterion D as a "departure in style from Requa's other late works and reflects the early influence of Requa's partnership with Irving Gill." Therefore, Requa has been recognized by the HRB for his design abilities in multiple architectural styles and did incorporate Modern elements into his work on several occasions. While the building at 2207 29th Street is a departure from Requa's earlier work in his signature "Southern California Architecture", the Mabel B. Schiller/Richard Requa House is a notable work of Requa's as it represents his ability to design in the Modern Minimal Traditional architectural style and integrate the building, landscaping, and terrain into one composition. Therefore, staff recommends designation under HRB Criterion D.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

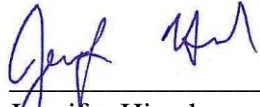
Conditions related to restoration or rehabilitation of the resource may be identified by staff during the Mills Act application process, and included in any future Mills Act contract.

CONCLUSION

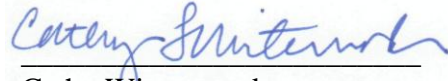
Based on the information submitted and staff's field check, it is recommended that the Mabel B. Schiller/Richard Requa House located at 2207 29th Street be designated under HRB Criteria C and D as an excellent example of Modern Minimal Traditional architecture designed by master architect, Richard Requa.

Designation brings with it the responsibility of maintaining the building in accordance with the Secretary of the Interior's Standards. The benefits of designation include the availability of the

Mills Act Program for reduced property tax; the use of the more flexible Historical Building Code; flexibility in the application of other regulatory requirements; the use of the Historical Conditional Use Permit which allows flexibility of use; and other programs which vary depending on the specific site conditions and owner objectives.



Jennifer Hirsch
Senior Planner



Cathy Winterrowd
Principal Planner/HRB Liaison

JH/cw

Attachments: (1) Draft Resolution
(2) Applicant's Historical Report under separate cover

RESOLUTION NUMBER N/A
ADOPTED ON 7/23/2009

WHEREAS, the Historical Resources Board of the City of San Diego held a noticed public hearing on 7/23/2009, to consider the historical designation of the **Mabel B. Schiller/Richard Requa House** (owned by Jeffrey G. Gunn & Megan Marcotte, 2207 29th Street, San Diego, CA 92104) located at **2207 29th Street, San Diego, CA 92104**, APN: **539-094-05-00**, further described as the west 40 feet of Lots 10, 11, and 12, Block 64, Seaman & Choate's Addition in the City of San Diego, County of San Diego, State of California; and

WHEREAS, in arriving at their decision, the Historical Resources Board considered the historical resources report prepared by the applicant, the staff report and recommendation, all other materials submitted prior to and at the public hearing, inspected the subject property and heard public testimony presented at the hearing; and

WHEREAS, the property would be added to the Register of Designated Historical Resources as **Site No. 0**, and

WHEREAS, designated historical resources located within the City of San Diego are regulated by the Municipal Code (Chapter 14, Article 3, Division 2) as such any exterior modifications (or interior if any interior is designated) shall be approved by the City, this includes but is not limited to modifications to any windows or doors, removal or replacement of any exterior surfaces (i.e. paint, stucco, wood siding, brick), any alterations to the roof or roofing material, alterations to any exterior ornamentation and any additions or significant changes to the landscape/ site.

NOW, THEREFORE,

BE IT RESOLVED, the Historical Resources Board based its designation of the Mabel B. Schiller/Richard Requa House on the following findings:

(1) The property is historically significant under CRITERION C for its distinctive characteristics of Modern Minimal Traditional architecture through the retention of character defining features and retains a good level of architectural integrity from its period of significance, the construction date of 1939. Specifically, the building retains a low-pitched hipped roof, stucco wall cladding, wood windows (including picture windows), wrought iron grilles, a small front porch, integrated landscape elements such as stucco walls, concrete steps, walkways, and front gate. This finding is further supported by the staff report, the historical research report, and written and oral evidence presented at the designation hearing; and

(2) The property is historically significant under CRITERION D for its representation of a notable work of Master Architect, Richard Requa. Specifically, the house is notable as one of Requa's Modern residences and his interpretation of Modern architecture through the integration of architecture, landscaping and terrain. This finding is further supported by the staff report, the historical research report, and written and oral evidence presented at the designation hearing

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, in light of the foregoing, the Historical Resources Board of the City of San Diego hereby approves the historical designation of the above named property. The designation includes the parcel and exterior of the building as Designated Historical Resource **Site No. 0**.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, the Secretary to the Historical Resources Board shall cause this resolution to be recorded in the office of the San Diego County Recorder at no fee, for the benefit of the City of San Diego, and with no documentary tax due.

Vote: N/A

BY: _____
JOHN LEMMO, Chair
Historical Resources Board

APPROVED AS TO FORM AND
LEGALITY: JAN I. GOLDSMITH,
CITY ATTORNEY

BY: _____
NINA FAIN
Deputy City Attorney